

State, which, correctly interpreted, either can or does impose restrictions upon its exercise, are propositions clearly sustained by a weight of argument and authority, placing them beyond the reach of successful refutation: Every day swells the number of those who advocate the doctrine of popular sovereignty, and insist upon its practical assertion by the people themselves; each succeeding election finds it a topic of increased excitement and agitation, furnishing renewed evidence that a large majority of the citizens of Maryland are favorable to Conventional Reform, and that unless the wishes of the people, in this behalf, are gratified, the sanction of the Legislature will not, much longer, be invoked. An act of the General Assembly legalising the use of the ballot box, in order effectually to test public opinion on this subject, is all that is asked, and, with due deference, it is submitted, that this is a reasonable request and ought not to be denied.

Resolutions of the Legislatures of the States of Virginia, South Carolina, Florida, Missouri, New Hampshire and Vermont, in relation to the subject of slavery in the territories of the United States, are herewith transmitted, and will be found to present the true issues between the northern and southern sections of the Union upon that dangerous and threatening question, in a manner, that cannot fail to commend itself to your most thoughtful consideration, and to elicit a solemn declaration of the policy which Maryland will feel bound to adopt, should a choice of alternatives be precipitated upon her. The dark and baleful spirit of abolitionism, which has hitherto contributed, so fearfully, to alienate the affections of the people of these States, to disturb the harmony and to endanger the permanence of the Union, is still progressing in its mad career, unmindful of the compromises which alone imparted vitality to the Constitution, and regardless alike of the admonitions of patriotism, the dictates of justice and the equal and undeniable rights of all the members of this confederacy. Concealing its lust for political power under the specious garb of an enlarged philanthropy, while luxuriating upon the labor of the slave, it wages unceasing and relentless warfare against the rights of his master. What was once considered and treated as an impotent faction of wicked or deluded fanatics, from the very impunity which a cautious forbearance too often affords, has now assumed the character of a formidable sectional organization, resolved, unless the signs of the times are strangely deceptive, not only to appropriate to its own exclusive use the common property of the United States, but by forcibly depriving the southern States of all participation in its enjoyment, to disgrace and degrade them from an equal rank with the other States of the Union. The Constitution of the United States, recognises, without limitation, the institution of domestic slavery, guarantees its existence and vindicates the right of the owner to the possession and service of the slave; and it cannot be doubted that if the power, now claimed to be exercised by Congress, to prohibit the emigration of the people of the slave-holding States, with their property and effects of all kinds, to any territory owned by the United States, had been asserted at the time when the Constitution was submitted, for ratification, to the States, that